

RESPONSE TEAM FIRST INTERIM REPORT

SCHOOL

VISITATION TEAM

Date

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INTRODUCTION

In partial fulfillment of the requirements to be accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges (NASC) and the state of Montana's Board of Public Education, the school is undergoing the self-study process using the performance based model entitled *School Improvement: Focusing on Student Performance*, published by the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE), 1997 Edition and the Performance Based Accreditation Manual adopted by the Montana's Board of Public Education.

The following represents this school's first interim report by the Response Team. It is expected that the staff, administration and directors of the school will review and analyze the content of this report and use the counsel provided in completing the remaining parts of the school improvement process. This will be necessary to ensure continued membership in the NASC as an accredited school and continued state accreditation through this *alternative accreditation model*.

SECTION I: THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROCESS RESPONSE TEAM REPORT

Part 1: Development of the Student and Community Profile

Principle:

The profile should be a compilation of available data concerning student performance, school climate, school organization, school personnel, community demographics and any external factors which may impact the educational process.

It is important that the staff realizes that identification and interpretation of this data is more important than the collection and reporting of it. This is the part of the task that gives meaning to the collection as it relates to school goals and desired learner results.

Persons responsible for the development of the students and community profile information should be aware that they may be called upon at any point of the school improvement process for additional information, clarification of information, and judgment related to existing or developed information.

Analysis and Counsel:

1. A great deal of enlightening and meaningful data has been collected and compiled to produce a profile of the community, school, students and staff. The data incorporates information from and about all stakeholders. It presents a comprehensive beginning from which data expansion can be accomplished.

The staff is commended for addressing problems of some sensitivity in such an open and inquiring fashion and for demonstrating care in its representation of particular constituents in nonjudgmental, comprehensive, and meaningful ways.

2. Staff-wide knowledge and acceptance of the profile data are essential in order for all to understand the focus of the improvement goals and to buy into the interventions prescribed by the SIP. It appears that your staff is aware of (a) the profile data, (b) how it impacted the determination of the mission, beliefs, and educational goals of the school and (c) the connection to focus goals. Keep up the good work.
3. The decisions you have made toward identification of target goals have been driven by the data collected. In turn the data has validated the decisions and the associated progress.
4. The joint work time allowed by the weekly early dismissal has promoted consistent and rapid information discovery and meaningful interpretation of the data.

Suggestions:

1. In some cases it was difficult to see the correlation between the graphs of the data and the associated narrative explanations. There is a mixed representation of data in the *percent* and the *percentile* formats. Narratives may need to be revisited to correctly identify which measure is being used in each case.
2. Profile data collection must be maintained each year in order to keep information available for establishing new Desired Learner Results and/or documenting SIP progress. This data may be used to show the effect over time of the implementation of the SIP.
3. It may be helpful to put data in a format that lends itself to annual collections and additions. A PowerPoint presentation is sometimes workable because "Slides" can be inserted where desired and they can be sorted to extrapolate information needed at any time.
4. It may be helpful over time to have archive copies of the data collection detailing how, by whom, and when the data was collected as well as the sources of the information. Over time these details will be forgotten and there will be no process to ensure that you are collecting comparable information.

Part 2: Formulation of School Beliefs

Principle:

Beliefs should represent the majority thinking of the entire school community and focus on the total school program. They should serve as the stimulus for creating understandings, desires and opportunities for supportive activities that lead toward the Desired Learner Results (DLR) identified during the SIP self-analysis.

BELIEF STATEMENTS FOR SCHOOL

Analysis and Counsel:

1. Staff, students, and community representatives were involved in the processes that lead to identification of the umbrella beliefs advocated by the school. Through group meetings and survey instruments given to students, parents, staff, and community members consensus was reached on the foundational beliefs that should guide the school.
2. Each belief represents the most appropriate or ideal condition for learning whether or not it represents the school's present status. This demonstrates a genuine interest of the stakeholders to promote school improvement.

Suggestions:

1. All beliefs should be annually reconfirmed by the stakeholders and clarified by the Steering Committee in order to insure that they remain meaningful throughout the process and that they foster a clear understanding to anyone who reads them.
2. Each belief should be analyzed by the Steering Committee to be sure that its specific meaning is clear. While using more open ended terminology often allows for a more comprehensive outlook, it can also prevent a school from knowing exactly what it would look like if all conditions reached an ideal standard.

Part 2A: Development of the School's Mission Statement

Principle:

The Mission Statement should be a concise statement that **reflects** the beliefs of the school. The statement should be a collective vision that motivates and inspires to give clear purpose and direction to the school. It should be easily understood by all and should be the school's Call to action."

It will guide the identification and expression of the school's Desired Learner Results.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>MISSION STATEMENT</i></p>
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Analysis and Counsel:

The mission statement is comprehensive and shows that efforts and decisions made in the school must be geared toward meeting students' future needs as well as present demands. The staff has been actively involved and is openly supportive of the mission. Community input was effective and is evident in the school's direction for the future.

Suggestions:

Continue your efforts to publicize your mission and goals to community, parents, staff and especially students. Students' knowledge of what and why they are addressing certain issues can be your biggest ally. When **they** make the connection the circuit will be complete for continual improvement.

Continue to trust that the process **will** produce measurable improvements in student achievement. It is important that the *process* not become the major issue in these efforts. The process must be allowed to be flexible as information and goals change throughout the operation.

Part 3: Identification of Desired Learner Results (DLRs)

Principle:

This section articulates the knowledge, skills, and understandings that the stakeholders believe are important for students to possess upon graduation from the High School.

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>DESIRED LEARNER RESULTS</i></p>
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Analysis and Counsel:

1. The school wide Desired Learner Results correlate closely with the school's Belief Statements.
2. DLR's #1, 2, and 8 seem to be ...
3. DLR's #4 and 9 need to be qualified/defined
4. The DLR's must be the basis for actual classroom instruction/activities and student learning objectives. They should be important and relevant to students and their success in today's world.
5. Constant *evidence gathering* is necessary to assess accomplishment of the DLR's.

Suggestions:

1. Construct or locate a checklist, inventory, and/or procedure to facilitate assessment of the affective/subjective types of learner results. Make sure that everyone understands and participates in data collection and realizes the value of keeping this type of data for **analysis of instructional and organizational effectiveness** throughout the process.
2. Determine what data will provide information on.... Would a portfolio be appropriate? Will test scores measure what you want them to measure? How will it be possible to track a student's knowledge base and skill level across time in a form that will document academic excellence or improvement?
3. Always remember that the umbrella objective of all improvement efforts is the improvement of **student performance**. Every decision, exercise and expenditure should be filtered through the question, "How will this impact the achievement of each individual student within the school?" Keep the focus

on students not equipment, or materials, or facilities.

Part 4: Analyzing Alignment of Instructional and Organizational Effectiveness and Desired Learner Results

Principle:

Each Desired Learner Result should have an appropriate measure of achievement or *performance indicator* identified for evidence gathering, assessment and judgment about the success of efforts toward the goal.

Analysis and Counsel:

This appears to be the next step in your work. Good luck!

Suggestions:

1. It would be useful to investigate and analyze whether or not the infrastructure of the school program will allow for the transfusion of intervention activities you may choose. As an example, if it is determined that a concentrated focus on reading skills is needed, will the school program allow for adjustments that will facilitate that kind of effort? Will interest, expertise, staffing, staff training, etc. be available to assist in that effort?
2. A united “marketing” plan focused on the target goal(s) will promote active involvement also by students, parents, and community. Staff appears very committed to the goals. It is now time to publicize and push for active involvement of students and out-of-school partners whenever possible. Also, remember to celebrate your successes in the public arena so that all can recognize your efforts along the way.
3. Create an Action Plan to guide your efforts in implementing interventions and assessing performance. That plan should delineate (1) the Target Desired Learner Result to be addressed; (2) who is responsible for addressing it; (3) what activities will be employed; (4) how will evidence be collected from the activities; (5) what time line is anticipated for a cycle of implementation and assessment.

Part 5: Development of the School Improvement Plan (SIP)

Principle:

The SIP must include any element of the school program that has been identified and

prioritized for attention in the next three to five years. Judgments about the effectiveness of the interventions or Auction plan” components by the school as a whole are the final objectives of the SIP.

Only when critiques related to **present performance levels** and **future goals or potentials** are made, is the process going to result in meaningful change for students and the school.

As interventions are set into motion and the school has entered the data collection and maintenance phases of a Desired Learner Result, additional Target Desired Learner Result(s) may be identified and prioritized for attention. In this way schools are constantly in the “improvement” mind-set and constantly prioritizing their school-wide goals.

An internal **annual review** and consideration of whether additions might be appropriate are strongly suggested. A school who waits for *perfection* in one area before beginning to focus attention on another will find itself forever working in one area alone. There is no Finish line” in the business of education!

Analysis and Counsel:

This document is now ready for production. It can be reviewed by the Response Team during production and upon completion as you request. We will assist you in any way we can along the way. Please, call.

Suggestion:

A suggestion for development of this plan would be to **design backward** from the desired learner result to the actions that will help you reach them. Example: If your focus is “improvement of reading scores”, collaboratively determine the *actions* needed by brainstorming the types of activities that each department and class can employ to support that goal. Then determine how the actions will be carried out, who will be responsible for the actions, over what period of time the action will be taken, and how evidence will be collected of the results.

SECTION 2: ACCREDITATION STANDARDS OF THE COMMISSION ON SCHOOLS OF THE NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Principle:

It is important that school personnel always remember that Standards I - X are still in effect and are liable for consideration by the Response Team at a later time. Self-evaluation of the school’s status in these areas is continually needed and attention to any deviations must be prompt and effective.

Although annual reporting methods for schools participating in the School

Improvement Process are abbreviated to require only the SIP information, the principal's and superintendent's signatures on the reporting document certify that the school is in full compliance with Standards I - X in addition to the SIP efforts.

Standard I--Educational Program

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

An effective school has a clearly written statement of philosophy and objectives for directing its educational programs and processes. Effective schools will also have an appropriate program of studies and provisions for the infusion of technology into the curriculum. The educational program of a school must recognize and provide for the individual needs, interests, and abilities of all students. The school should be concerned not only with accumulation of knowledge, development of skills, and improvement of understanding, but also with the development of interests, tastes, appreciations, ideals and attitudes, and the functioning of these elements in a democratic society. The maximum development of each student mentally, socially, physically and emotionally, is facilitated by a balanced program of appropriate school experiences.

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Standard II--Student Personnel Services

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

Student personnel services are those services designed to give systematic assistance to students. An effective program of student personnel services facilitates the total development of each student.

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Standard III--School Plant and Equipment

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

The school plant, consisting of site, buildings, equipment, and services, is an important factor in the functioning of the educational program. The school plant serves as a vehicle for the implementation of the school mission. The school plant would provide for a variety of instructional activities and programs and for the health and safety of ALL persons. The school plant should incorporate aesthetic features which contribute to a positive educational atmosphere while providing for needed flexibility.

Commendations:**Recommendations:****Standard IV--Library Medial Program**

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

The library media program is an integral part of the school. The school library media program ensures that appropriate learning activities are provided that will enable students and staff to become effective, independent users of ideas and information for lifelong learning.

Commendations:**Recommendations:****Standard V--Records**

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

The maintenance, handling, and protection of student records is essential to the management of the school and is required in the interests of the students and parents.

Commendations:**Recommendations:**

Standard VI--School Improvement

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

The continual improvement of the educational program is essential in providing quality results. Innovative, exemplary, and experimental programs, coupled with teacher improvement programs and public participation in planning distinguish good schools. Successful improvement programs focus on the total school rather than each of the separate components within the school. Systematic analysis of data regarding student performance, coupled with an examination of the extent to which instructional and organizational practices within the school are aligned in support of student learning objectives and the mission of the school, are essential when developing a comprehensive school improvement plan.

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Standard VII--Preparation of Personnel

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

The quality of education is directly related to the personnel who guide and operate the educational programs. The education, experience, and competence of personnel are important factors. How these individuals work together to provide a cohesive and positive learning environment is also important.

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Standard VIII--Administration

Principle:

The basic responsibility for the administration of the school rests upon the principal or school director. The principal should supervise the instructional program, coordinate all activities of the school, furnish leadership to set and achieve goals to improve the educational program, and carry out the necessary administrative procedures.

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Standard IX--Teacher Load

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

Student to teacher ratio is a crucial element in ensuring effective education. Standards which define adequate ratios are necessary to protect this principle. There are many desirable educational objectives that can only be achieved through close personal interaction between teachers and students and class loads have a direct impact upon the achievement of these goals.

Commendations:

Recommendations:

Standard X--Student Activities

It is the opinion of this Response Team that the School appropriately meets the elements of this basic standard for accreditation by the NASC and the state of Montana.

Principle:

Effective education includes support activities that supplement the basic instructional program by providing additional interests and experiences for learning to take place.

Commendations:

Recommendations: